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Strident, yet serene

The works of three artists on show at Artworld are inspired by their experience of diverse cultures



LAYERS AND TEXTURES

the works on display at Artworld

One of

The Zen of perception and meditative approach when extended to art, particularly the medium of painting, offers results that are spiritually moving and soul stirring. This is evident in the works of the three artists, being showcased at Artworld. They draw their inspiration from the cultural backgrounds they emerge from.

These are painter, sculptor, muralist and mosaic artist Kathleen Scarboro, painter Pamela Winfield, and painter and illustrator Brigitte Smith. Engaging in a medium that maps the Renaissance style, Kathleen and Pamela construct their paintings through assiduous layering, which requires in-depth technical knowledge.

Insightful

Kathleen has been practising this almost dying tradition for years, bringing to her creations a plastic quality that also defines her analogue activity as a sculptor. Her subjectivity is grounded in looking through the lens of Indian visual culture as well as life lived in rural and urban spaces. Her insightful paintings juxtapose many situations, creating a vortex of optical data that engage the viewer in a dialogue. She plots her style of realism through the Renaissance apparatus of chiaroscuro, foreshortening, perspective and tonal manipulations of colour. Kathleen lives her experiences through varied protagonists, which perhaps contour the saliency of power and dynamism in her expressions.

Pamela's works are an extension of the same technique but her subjects are grounded in the rural hilly areas of North India. She relishes the play of textures as she contrasts the plain and bright blue wall with grey sandstones of the pavement to a kitschy green plastic can of kerosene. The earthiness implicit in her works is her strong optical response to the reality around her, which fascinates and provides the springboard for her inspiration. It is the simplicity of her perception that makes Pamela's works contemplative yet, positively energised.

The works of Brigitte emanate a spiritual glow that permeates every frame. Her methodology in engaging with her preferred medium allows her to mark a posture of difference. She works on a board that is given an application of lacquer. Over this, she spreads a particular metal paper either in gold or silver sourced from Thailand. Using oil pencils, Brigitte methodically and meditatively constructs her colours that are built up in layers. When the work is complete, another thin coat of lacquer is applied to fix the work permanently. Her palette is limited but the magical spell she weaves is through her stories and inherent philosophical outlook, encapsulating metaphors and symbols that make her works dialogic. The tulip is a ubiquity and spells, for Brigitte, an awakening of the soul. The migratory ibis birds are evocative of the symbolic migration of the soul and hence, of life and death. The bull symbolises patience and endurance. Having lived and worked in many cultures in different countries, her works are universal in their appeal. Reinforced further by her meticulous drawing and rendering, the spiritual stillness salient to her works is again an extension of her persona guided by her spiritual guru, over the past three decades. Her works exude an aura of gothic simplicity as well as soaring spirituality.

Similar yet distinct, metaphorical yet lucid, meditative yet dynamic, strident yet subdued are the binaries that define the works of the three artists, weaving them into a fabric of commonality yet remaining distinct by the texture of their experiences.

The show is on at Artworld till February 20.

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